

Thanks to the great work of Advisory Council Chair Timmie Faghin and Co-Chair Gabriel Cohen, the following letter was published on Friday, January 30, 2004 in the Seattle Post Intelligencer. The Advisory Council is directed to advocate by the Older Americans Act for older adults. The following letter is a great example of advocacy in action. All Advisory Council members are encouraged to send in examples of their own letters to the editor and letters to their legislators.

THE ELDERLY

Legislature can help improve in-home care

Gov. Gary Locke's recent budget recommendation includes \$3.4 million, only 75 percent of the \$6 million required for case-management that serves vulnerable elderly in our state. This underfunding will result in a decreased level of appropriate service quality and will adversely affect the safety of the in-home care system in our state. According to an analysis by Sterling and Associates, each in-home client requires 30 hours of case-management time every year. At the funding level recommended for 2004, case managers can provide only 24.75 hours.

Washington's in-home care system is a model for the rest of the country. Without the past decade's shift to home and community care, 2003's long-term care cases would have cost this state \$227 million more in just one year. Not only has this program resulted in providing quality support for the everyday essential needs of vulnerable elders who prefer living at home over an institution, but it is clearly cost-effective by saving millions for the state.

The additional \$3 million necessary from Washington state will be matched by federal Medicaid dollars that would make the critical role of case-managers operational on an appropriate level.

In his State of the State address this year, the governor said, "Nobody should have to suffer just because they are poor, powerless, unheard or unknown." We hope the Legislature will heed these words and add the necessary \$3 million.

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http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/opinion/158607_ltrs30.html